United Nations S/PV.6796

Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6796th meeting
Friday, 29 June 2012, 9.50 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Wang Min	(China)
Members:	Azerbaijan	Mr. Sharifov
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	France	Mr. Briens
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	Togo	Mr. Kandangha-Bariki
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (S/2012/365)

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2012/421)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-39660 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 9.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (S/2012/365)

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas(S/2012/421)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Ambassador Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance Army Issues, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/421, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas, as well as document S/2012/365, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the Lord's Resistance Army.

I wish also to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/481, which contains a letter from the Secretary-General dated 25 June 2012 addressed to the President of the Security Council and transmitting the regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army pursuant to Security Council presidential statement S/PRST/2011/21.

I now give the floor to Mr. Moussa.

Mr. Moussa (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to present to the Security Council the second report (S/2012/421) of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), including the efforts undertaken by the Organization to combat the Lord's Resistance Army. Given the fact that Ambassador Madeira, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance Army Issues, is with us today, my statement on this issue fill focus essentially on the United Nations regional strategy to address this scourge.

For more than a year now, UNOCA has been working in close cooperation with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), its member States and other partners in an effort to overcome various challenges faced by the subregion in the areas of peace, security and development. Those challenges include political governance, institutional weakness, managing electoral processes, environmental degradation, socio-economic development, the consequences of the Libyan crisis, combating the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, and the cross-border threats posed by armed groups such as Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army. Thanks to the experience we have gained on the ground, we have been able to identify priority areas for UNOCA-ECCAS engagement that will guide our efforts in the subregion.

(*spoke in English*)

As the secretariat of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, we have also successfully facilitated the functioning of that Committee, including the convening of two ministerial meetings. Moving forward, we will help the Committee to implement the counter-terrorism road map that it adopted last December. We will also support the Committee's twentieth anniversary celebrations.

UNOCA, together with the United Nations Office for West Africa, has been actively engaged in facilitating the implementation of resolution 2039 (2012), on piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, in close collaboration with ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the African Union. Together, and as requested by this body, we are working towards the holding of a regional summit before the end of the year.

The subregion has rich reserves of natural resources. However, the effective management of those resources and their judicious exploitation for the benefit of the majority of the populations remains a major challenge. A most encouraging development in the subregion is the current healthy state of the economies of the countries of Central Africa, with a reported average growth rate of more than 5 per cent in 2011. In spite of that good news, there are indications that, partly due to shortcomings in economic governance, the benefits of that growth at the macroeconomic level are yet to trickle down to the level of the vast majority of the population.

During his visit to the subregion last February, the Secretary-General highlighted the necessity of bridging the widening gaps between the rich and the poor in some Central African states. He urged Governments to "do more to strengthen the social fabric by promoting social equity and ensuring a better distribution of income" and better prospects for sustainable growth, peace and prosperity.

On 14 November 2011, I briefed the Council (see S/PV.6657) on the tremendous suffering that the most brutal criminal group in Central Africa, the LRA, was inflicting on the local population. For over two decades, this group has maimed, killed, kidnapped women and children, and caused the displacement of more than 445,000 people. Following my briefing, at the end of its meeting the Council adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2011/21, in which it encouraged UNOCA, in coordination with the United Nations Office to the African Union, to engage with the United Nations presences in the LRA-affected region and the AU to develop a regional strategy to address the threat posed by the LRA. In that regard, we consulted extensively with the Governments in the affected countries, national and regional actors and the wider international community to develop a coordinated strategy.

The strategy, which has been submitted to the Council, focuses on five key objectives. They include, first, support for the operationalization and full implementation of the African Union regional cooperation initiative against the LRA; secondly, enhancing efforts to promote the protection of civilians; thirdly, expanding disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) activities to cover all LRA-affected areas; fourthly, promoting a coordinated humanitarian and child protection response in all LRA-affected areas and; lastly, supporting LRA-affected Governments in the fields of peacebuilding, human rights, the rule of law and development, so as to enable them to extend State authority across their territories. Once the strategy is endorsed, the United Nations and its partners will need to agree on its implementation plan.

The strategy goes beyond military operations and DDRRR. It addresses the plight of the victims to ensure their social and economic reintegration into their respective communities. However, the strategy must only represent the beginning of vigorous attention by the Council to address the LRA issues, in order to put an end to these atrocities once and for all. Its successful implementation will depend on the level of cooperation and engagement among the countries affected, and on the mobilization of resources to address funding gaps.

In spite of the recent capture of one of its senior commanders and its significantly diminished capability, the LRA remains extremely dangerous and retains the capacity to inflict considerable suffering on the population. In that regard, I appeal to the Security Council and the wider international community to actively support the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy and the AU Regional Cooperation Initiative. It is also imperative to ensure that the LRA's source of funding is investigated.

UNOCA is committed to continuing to support the countries of the subregion in their efforts to foster peace and security. In that regard, UNOCA will continue to support subregional initiatives to address the major challenges to peace and security in Central Africa, in particular the implementation of the regional strategy on the LRA, measures to curb the threat posed by piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, and support to the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Moussa for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Madeira.

Mr. Madeira: I greet the Security Council on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Jean Ping, and wish to thank the United Nations, particularly the Security Council and the Secretary-General, for their continued commitment to supporting the African Union and other international efforts aimed at eliminating the threat of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). I also wish to express our

gratitude for the concrete United Nations support being channeled through its missions, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO); its offices — the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic; and humanitarian agencies in order to respond to the threat of the LRA and its impact on the countries affected, particularly the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of South Sudan. That support has effectively enhanced implementation of the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army.

I wish to stress that although successive military operations have largely disabled the LRA command, the rebels' ability to commit atrocities against civilians has remained undiminished. The 11 June report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA and on areas affected by the LRA (S/2012/421) accurately depicts the current situation vis-à-vis the LRA. However, I wish to underline the efforts made so far by some key partners of the African Union in the fight against the LRA.

The ongoing United States-backed military operations, especially in the Central African Republic, have sustained pressure on the LRA, keeping the rebels constantly on the run. Those operations contributed to the capture by Ugandan troops on 12 May of the self-styled Major General Caesar Acellam Otto, a one-time number four in the LRA command hierarchy; the capture by Central African Republic troops on 22 May of two LRA combatants; and the killing on 16 June of two other LRA combatants by Ugandan troops, who also rescued seven civilians who had been abducted. Furthermore, MONUSCO, the United States Government and various non-governmental organizations are supporting these actions with psychological operations in the form of come-home radio messages and air-dropped leaflets in local languages, aimed at encouraging mass defections by LRA elements. When it becomes fully operational, the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative is expected to bolster those efforts, particularly through military operations, so as to heighten pressure on the LRA, leading to more captures, surrenders, defections and the eventual elimination of the entire group.

At this juncture, allow me to acknowledge the enormous support and commitment the European Union has demonstrated towards the Regional Cooperation Initiative on the LRA. The European Union has been providing funds to support the African Union (AU) efforts to eliminate the LRA since 2010.

This meeting gives me the opportunity to apprise the Council of some key issues concerning the Regional Cooperation Initiative on the LRA. The first ministerial meeting of the joint coordination mechanism on the LRA, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 8 May, adopted concrete measures and made important decisions on the next steps to be taken in implementing the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative. They include the full operationalization of the regional task force headquarters and the three sectors; coordination between the task force and the United Nations missions and offices on the ground; and the convening of a support forum to mobilize resources for the Cooperation Initiative. In addition, the 321st meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council, held in Addis Ababa on 22 May, extended authorization for the implementation of the Initiative for 12 months.

The major objectives of the African Union-led Initiative are strengthening the capacity of the affected countries to effectively respond to and neutralize the LRA threat; facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the affected communities and creating an environment conducive to the stabilization and rehabilitation of the affected areas. Those objectives, particularly the latter two — relating to humanitarian assistance, the protection of civilians, support to former combatants for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration, and the long-term recovery needs of those affected — resonate with those of the United Nations system on the ground and have thus been well articulated in the comprehensive regional strategy on the LRA.

The key components and structures of the initiative are the joint coordination mechanism — an ad hoc political body composed of the Ministers of Defence of the four LRA-affected countries, with a secretariat in Bangui and chaired by the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security — whose task is dealing with the general political aspects, providing strategic direction and coordinating with all stakeholders in the fight against the LRA; a 5,000-strong force with its headquarters in Yambio, South Sudan; and three operational sectors, in Nzara in South Sudan, Dungu in

the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Obo in the Central African Republic.

Regarding the status of the implementation of the Regional Cooperation Initiative, we can state that since the authorization in November 2011 of the African Union-led Initiative by the African Union Peace and Security Council, the following efforts have been accomplished.

The command and control architecture of the regional task force, which had not been upon decided and thus remained a potential impediment to operations, was adopted on 8 May at the first ministerial meeting of the Joint Coordination Mechanism. The regional task force headquarters has been fully staffed with 30 officers, including a civilian humanitarian adviser, a civilian human rights adviser and a police officer to provide advice on the rule of law and ensure that the activities of our soldiers in the LRA-affected areas and their interaction with the affected communities and LRA elements are conducted in strict respect of human rights and the rule of law. They have all undergone induction.

A joint team comprising military officers from the African Union regional task force headquarters, the UNOAU, the European Union and the United States of America are currently conducting a technical assessment mission in the sectors to evaluate their capabilities, challenges and needs for effective operations. The process for the adoption of major technical support documents, notably standard operating procedures, rules of engagement, common measures on the treatment of LRA combatants and victims, and policy on civilian protection are on track.

On the political and diplomatic front, I have undertaken jointly with my colleague the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, Mr. Abou Moussa, to encourage the missions to engage the leadership of the LRA-affected countries to maintain their commitment or, where necessary, urge them to renew cooperation on the LRA issue.

At the sidelines of those missions, we have often engaged representatives of cooperating international partners to galvanize international support for the regional cooperation initiative against LRA. We also undertook a joint mission to N'Djamena in April, within our strategic objective of seeking the diplomatic support of the neighbours of the LRA-affected countries to block the possible escape of the LRA members into new areas in those countries. Consultations are ongoing with authorities of the Republic of the Sudan for a similar mission to Khartoum.

The effective implementation of the African Union-led initiative is, however, being undermined by certain critical challenges, for which we appeal for international support. Those challenges include predictability of financial and material resources and logistical support for the Joint Coordination Mechanism secretariat and the Office of the Special Envoy for the LRA Issue, the regional task force headquarters operations and the operational units tracking the LRA in the respective sectors.

The operational units require concrete support in terms of appropriate training, harmonized communication systems, food rations, medical support, air and ground mobility, munitions, fuel and lubricants, inter alia, to enable them to undertake robust military operations against the LRA so as to induce defections or the surrender and capture of LRA combatants as well as the rescue of LRA abductees.

I wish to inform the Security Council that, on 22 November 2011, the African Union Peace and Security Council declared the LRA a terrorist organization and requested the Security Council to do likewise. I take this opportunity to formally request the Security Council, through you, Mr. President, to consider the request of the African Union Peace and Security Council and declare the LRA a terrorist organization. I also wish to echo the African Union Peace and Security Council request of 22 May 2012 to the Security Council to consider modalities for enhancing its support to the African Union-led international efforts, inter alia, by adjusting the mandates of the United Nations peacekeeping missions in the LRA-affected countries. In that regard, I wish to reiterate the need to make available an air mobility network within the three sectors.

I wish to appeal further to the Security Council for support for resources to mitigate the aforementioned challenges to the effective functioning of the Joint Coordination Mechanism secretariat and Office of the African Union Special Envoy for the LRA Issue in Bangui, operations of the regional task force/joint operations centre headquarters in Yambio as well as the sector headquarters and their operational units in Nzara, Dungu and Obo.

We applaud the continued political engagement of the United States on the LRA issue, particularly for having deployed the approximately 100 military personnel to the region in October 2011 to provide logistical assistance, planning and intelligence. We thank the European Union for the substantial and sustained support to the African Union-led regional cooperation initiative against LRA. That support has proven to be essential in the operationalization of the different structures of the initiative. We also recognize and appreciate the efforts of the Members of Parliament of the United Kingdom who debated the LRA issue and urged their Government to do everything in its power to arrest Kony. We welcome those efforts and request more from other States Members of the United Nations, so as to further enhance the current global momentum against Kony and the LRA. In that regard, I urge the Security Council to help us deny the LRA any external sources of support, including safe haven for their sympathizers who continue to issue statements from the diaspora in support of the terrorist group.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ambassador Madeira for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for scheduling today's important meeting of the Security Council. Let me begin also by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his briefing and for the valuable contribution that he makes to peace and security in the Central African region. I also wish to thank the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance Army Issues, Ambassador Madeira, for his very helpful briefing this morning. His presence here today is a demonstration of the strong coordination between the United Nations and the African Union on that important topic. The United Kingdom encourages the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to continue to coordinate the work of the United Nations, the African Union and the States affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to counter the LRA threat.

As Mr. Moussa and Ambassador Madeira have just reminded us, the LRA remains an unprincipled and violent threat to civilians across Central Africa. The atrocities it commits have serious humanitarian and human rights consequences. Council members and Special Representative Abou Moussa heard graphic accounts of those atrocities in an Arria-formula meeting last week with some of those directly involved in working with the victims.

The United Kingdom condemns in the strongest terms the LRA's continued violations of international law and human rights law. The LRA's campaign has the potential to cause further instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of South Sudan and the Central African Republic, and to hamper the efforts of those countries to progress towards peace and security. Removing the threat of the LRA is important in terms of creating and consolidating a secure and stable environment in the affected countries.

The release of the United Nations regional strategy on the Lord's Resistance Army is a welcome step towards achieving that aim. The international community must now ensure that there is an appropriate and coordinated international response to the problem. We need a unified response from the LRA-affected countries, the African Union and the United Nations political, development, humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in those countries.

In that regard, the United Kingdom welcomes the work that the African Union has undertaken towards the implementation of its regional task force, about which we have just heard from Ambassador Madeira. The United Kingdom urges the full deployment of troops across the region as soon as possible.

The United Nations regional strategy must now be implemented fully and quickly. I encourage UNOCA to develop a costed implementation plan for the strategy, outlining priority actions and articulating the results that will be achieved. It is important as soon as possible to identify and explain to the broader donor community the resource gaps.

The United Kingdom also commends the important work of the United Nations peacekeeping missions in protecting civilians. Continued and improved coordination and information-sharing between these missions and with other stakeholders will further enhance these efforts. This is why the United Kingdom has supported an increase in the capacity of the information cell in northern Democratic Republic of the Congo, which will improve information exchange between the missions.

I am pleased to see that important work such as the successful demobilization, disarmament, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration programme is being expanded across the entire LRA-affected region. I urge the United Nations to deliver consistent levels of support for this programme across the region and to assess and respond to recent changes in amnesty laws in the region as far as they affect the programme.

I now turn to UNOCA's wider role in other security issues across Central Africa. The United Kingdom remains concerned about the increased levels of instability in the region. I welcome the enhanced regional collaboration to counter these threats, and would encourage expansion and intensification of this cooperation. UNOCA will have an important role to play in supporting upstream conflict prevention by pre-empting tensions in the region and mediating between parties.

The United Kingdom also recognizes the leadership that the United Nations is showing on maritime security and the positive role played by Central African States. A coordinated regional response is important in this area too. In this regard, we welcome the Economic Community of Central African States and Economic Community of West African States maritime security memorandum of understanding. Regional dialogue should cover issues beyond just piracy and include illegal fishing, illegal oil bunkering, weapons, people and narcotics trafficking.

Lastly, I thank Council members for their support for the draft presidential statement that the United Kingdom delegation has prepared and that you, Sir, will shortly issue on the Council's behalf.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): We thank your delegation, Mr. President, for facilitating this discussion today. My delegation would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his comprehensive briefing on the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). We also thank the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on LRA issues, Ambassador Francisco Madeira, for his useful briefing to the Council.

Regarding the situation in Central Africa, we are pleased with the continued efforts of the political leadership of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to address the threats affecting their subregion, as witnessed at the summit meeting held in January. South Africa commends the excellent economic growth rates registered by the countries of the region despite the current difficult economic and financial climate. This notwithstanding, efforts must be employed to ensure that this growth translates into poverty alleviation and benefits the majority of the vulnerable and marginalized communities.

We remain convinced that economic development and security are mutually reinforcing, and we therefore commend the work of UNOCA in supporting States of the region in strengthening conflict prevention and peacebuilding and countering cross-border threats. We particularly commend the countries of the region for conducting their elections in a peaceful manner. As noted by the Secretary-General (S/2012/421), the concern remains that elections-related violence could be a source of instability in the absence of transparent, legal, participatory and inclusive processes.

We are equally concerned about the impact of insecurity in the Sahel in the follow-up to the Libyan crisis on peace, stability and socio-economic development in the Central African region. The proliferation of weapons and the spread of transnational organized crime and terrorist groups continue to pose a threat to the security of the region. Equally worrisome in this regard are reports that Boko Haram is now operating beyond the borders of Nigeria.

My delegation is pleased with the high level of cooperation taking place between UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa, as well as other United Nations presences in the region, in addressing the common security and socio-economic challenges of the subregion. The lessons learned could enhance greater effectiveness and efficiency of both regional presences. This collaboration has also extended to other regional bodies such as ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States and the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea to address maritime security challenges facing the region.

UNOCA has an important mandate in working with the United Nations peacekeeping missions in the affected areas, the United Nations Office to the African Union and the African Union (AU) to facilitate cooperation in countering the threat posed by the LRA. Collaboration with the relevant regional and subregional organizations is of paramount importance. Over the past year, the United Nations and

the AU have undertaken a number of joint initiatives, including visits to countries affected by LRA activities. These collaborative approaches have assisted the two organizations in strengthening the international resolve to combat the scourge of the LRA.

The activities of the LRA remain a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region, with grave humanitarian consequences. South Africa is concerned about the devastating effects of this armed group and its continued activities in a number of African countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. The brutality of these activities continues to haunt thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children, and has resulted in massive displacements of people and an acute humanitarian crisis.

The African Union has declared the LRA a terrorist organization, and accordingly the Security Council has had to deal with the LRA as such. South Africa commends the ongoing military cooperation between the countries affected by LRA activities in addressing this challenge.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the official launching of the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA on 24 March, including a joint coordination mechanism, a regional task force and a joint operations centre. The Initiative will, inter alia, strengthen the operational capabilities of the countries affected by the atrocities of the LRA and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to affected States. Ambassador Madeira has elaborated on the modalities of the Initiative. It will be vital for the international community to provide all necessary support to the Initiative, particularly in logistical, financial and technical terms, so as to facilitate the effective functioning of the different components of the Initiative and build the capacity of the armed and security forces of the affected countries.

We reaffirm that military action against the LRA should be conducted in a manner that seeks to minimize injury to civilians, and be in compliance with the applicable international law, including international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. South Africa wishes to underscore that these military operations should be part of a broader strategy that should include the granting of amnesty, policies for facilitating defections and reintegrations, and arrests of LRA commanders indicted by the International Criminal Court. In this regard, we welcome the arrest of a senior commander of the LRA, Caesar Acellam Otto.

Finally, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the work done by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, and his team, and we wish him well in his ongoing endeavours. If UNOCA is to be able to implement all its plans and programmes for the region, it is important that it be allocated the resources it needs.

My delegation supports the draft presidential statement that will be adopted by the Council shortly.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting to discuss the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), particularly in the context of the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, and Ambassador Madeira for their briefings.

We have taken note of the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/421) on UNOCA and the LRA and on a regional strategy for the LRA-affected areas.

The countries of Central Africa are making steady progress in overcoming the negative effects of decades of instability and conflict. The region has seen overall political stability. Timely elections have been held in several countries, which have further strengthened democratic institutions. Countries are pursuing economic reform, which has resulted in robust economic growth in the region. They are also cooperating with regional and foreign partners in addressing their common challenges, such as the proliferation of weapons, transnational organized crime and terrorism. The African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States have also continued to play a crucial role in addressing these problems in partnership with UNOCA and the United Nations Office to the African Union.

Despite those positive trends, the countries of the region continue to grapple with the effects of conflicts of the past. Overall socio-economic indicators still remain poor and the precarious security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel is adversely impacting on the region. Activities of terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, armed groups and transnational

crime networks, illicit drug trafficking, and maritime piracy and robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea continue to threaten the security and stability of the region.

It is in this context that the activities of UNOCA assume significance, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention, early warning and addressing socio-economic challenges. We commend UNOCA and the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, Mr. Abou Moussa, for their active engagement with national Governments and with regional and subregional organizations. UNOCA should further strengthen that collaboration and assist the efforts of Governments and organizations in the region so that regional cooperative frameworks developed to deal with those common challenges are fully implemented.

The focus of the Council should lead to galvanizing the international community to provide adequate resources for the national and regional endeavours, particularly in strengthening national capacities with regard to civil administration, police and security forces, security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes and socio-economic development. Given the fragility of political institutions in several countries, it is also important for national and regional authorities to pay attention to the need for inclusive political processes, including electoral reforms.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is a major threat to maritime navigation, trade and economic activities in several countries in Central and Western Africa. We have noted the progress made towards a coordinated approach to address the problem, including the establishment of a multinational coordination centre for maritime safety and security in Equatorial Guinea. We hope that the proposed summit-level meeting will be held soon to work out a regional strategy.

It is a matter of serious concern that the LRA activities have increased this year, particularly in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The LRA remains a potent threat and its criminal activities have uprooted over 445,000 persons from their communities in the Central African region, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda. While countries like Uganda, with support from regional and foreign partners, have undertaken a number of measures to address the challenge posed by the LRA, a lot remains to be done. In that connection, we have taken note of UNOCA's efforts and the launch of the African Union-led regional cooperation initiative against the LRA earlier this year. We hope that the African Union will continue to work closely with the affected countries so that the regional task force may be expeditiously deployed in the three identified sectors.

We agree with the Secretary-General's view that any effective strategy on the LRA should focus on strengthening the capacity of national authorities, including their security forces, to expand the authority of the State, and focus on overall socio-economic development in the affected areas. International humanitarian, development and peacebuilding assistance to the LRA-affected areas should address the underlying causes for activities of armed groups. The national programmes for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration activities should be supported with the provision of adequate resources and be reinforced by a long-term plan for employment generation among the affected communities. It is also important that serious efforts be made to eliminate the remaining active groups and target the leadership of the LRA to bring them to justice. External assistance to the affected countries should be apolitical in nature and respect national sovereignty in policy as well as operational matters.

In that connection, it is important that United Nations missions in the region should not be burdened further without augmentation of their resources in manpower and material. Without a commensurate increase in resources, the expansion of mission mandates will not result in operational effectiveness.

In conclusion, India stands ready to contribute to efforts to address the challenges of the countries of the Central African region, particularly in the fields of capacity-building and human resource and socio-economic development.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. We were fortunately prepared for it by the Arria-formula meeting held last week at the initiative of Portugal and the United Kingdom.

I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, Mr. Abou Moussa, and the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance

Army Issues, Ambassador Francisco Caetano José Madeira, for their very thorough briefings.

Morocco welcomes the important gains achieved by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), which have come barely one year after its effective launching, in the areas of coordination and cooperation between States and organizations of the subregion, but also between the United Nations agencies and missions. Based on our belief that only effective and united regional cooperation will provide lasting responses to the challenges facing the Central African countries, we commend the strengthening of cooperation between the UNOCA, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. The support for strengthening subregional institutions must continue to be a priority for UNOCA.

With regard to the fight against transnational organized crime, the security challenges from the Sahel region, and the phenomenon of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Morocco commends the efforts of UNOCA to help to establish regional responses to those challenges via strengthened cross-regional and interregional cooperation. We specifically welcome the cooperation established between the UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the commitment to work together to counter the common threats affecting the security and stability of those two regions.

With regard to piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, we commend the efforts of the Office to facilitate, on the one hand, the holding of the regional summit on piracy in the Gulf of Guinea scheduled for December and, on the other hand, the cooperation between the ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission. Morocco supports the efforts of the regional Office and is prepared to contribute to any initiative aimed at curbing the current security threats to Central Africa via our support to countries of the region and in the framework of the ministerial conference of the African States bordering the Atlantic Ocean.

Despite the positive gains made to counter the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army, that group continues to destabilize and destroy the lives of thousands of children, women and men throughout the Central African region. We continue to believe that the close cooperation of States in the region and the determined mobilization of the international community will ultimately thwart the LRA's destabilization strategy while complying with international humanitarian law.

In that context, we would like to commend the mobilization of UNOCA to provide effective regional cooperation at the governmental level, at the level of international and non-governmental organizations, and also in terms of civil society. The protection of civilians must continue to be at the centre of any effort undertaken against the LRA, and measures such as strengthening and expanding the regional radios stations throughout the four countries affected by the LRA should be encouraged. The success of the process of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation and national reconciliation and the prosecution of persons responsible for such crimes should also continue to be one of the priorities of countries of the region and of the entire international community.

We took note with great interest of the regional strategy crafted by the United Nations to respond to the threat posed by, and the impact of the activities of, the LRA. We took note in particular of the five pillars for strategic action, and we noted with interest the importance attached to the issue of the social and economic development of the affected countries, which is a prerequisite for the promotion of peace and stability in the subregion.

To that end, Morocco will continue to cooperate with the States of the region, specifically the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in key areas of human development, including health, education, agriculture and professional training.

Lastly, my country is pleased to contribute, by means of a large contingent within the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to helping to protect civilians and ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the provision of medical services.

I should like, before concluding, to commend the outstanding work undertaken by Mr. Abou Moussa, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and his team and to assure them of our full support as they carry out their mission. We also unreservedly support the draft presidential statement prepared by the delegation of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Sharifov (Azerbaijan): I should like at the outset to thank the presidency for having convened

this very important debate. We also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, and the African Union (AU) Special Envoy, Mr. Madeira, for their comprehensive briefings.

We welcome the positive developments registered in the region during the reporting period, especially the conduct of peaceful elections, economic growth and efforts to promote regional integration and cooperation. However, cross-border threats, the flow of illegal arms and the activities of armed groups and terrorist organizations, especially Boko Haram, the increase in piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, poverty and trafficking in persons continue to raise concerns.

Incidents of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea have risen significantly in recent times, so that the area has the second most acute piracy problem on the African continent. The increasing number of piracy attacks, in addition to transnational organized crime, including the trafficking of illicit weapons, constitute a serious threat to peace, security and economic development in both the coastal and hinterland States of the region.

The measures and initiatives undertaken at the national and regional levels to mobilize international attention to this problem and enhance maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea should be commended.

Insecurity in the Sahel region continues to have a significant negative economic and social impact on a number of Central African countries, and more consistency and determination are needed in addressing those potential and actual risks and threats.

We are also deeply concerned by the atrocities committed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which continue to pose a threat to regional security and stability. The LRA bears responsibility for grave violations against civilians, including killing, maiming, abductions, sexual slavery, rape and the recruitment and use of children, as well as the displacement of 445,000 people. We note the work of the United Nations agencies, in particular the World Food Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in providing humanitarian assistance to this vulnerable group.

We welcome the development of the United Nations regional strategy on the LRA, with the contribution of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, and the launching of the African Union-led regional cooperation initiative. It should be noted that the necessary funding is essential for the implementation of both the strategy and the initiative.

At the same time, we would stress the importance of further strengthening cooperation among all LRA-affected countries, in particular through the Regional Task Force, to address those common regional threats. We take positive note in this regard of the agreement reached on information-sharing between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda this March.

The recent decrease in the number of LRA attacks brought about an improvement in the regional security situation. In the context of that approach, State authority, as well as disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration activities, should be further strengthened in the LRA-affected areas. Moreover, various programmes to reduce poverty and create job opportunities should be implemented by the respective Governments, with donor assistance. The reintegration into society of the displaced persons, LRA abductees and former combatants is also very important.

Even successful national efforts cannot bring about overall normalcy and ensure a comprehensive solution if they are not supported by the United Nations system and the broader international community. Therefore the initiatives undertaken by the Governments of the affected countries, as well as the efforts of the African Union and other relevant regional and subregional organizations, should be forcefully supported.

Mr. Cabral (Portugal): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting on this very important subject. I would like to start by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for the very comprehensive briefings on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and on United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). I also want to thank the Special Envoy of the African Union for the LRA issue, Ambassador Francisco Madeira, for his very important statement to the Council.

The LRA continues to pose a serious threat to civilians in four affected countries. We remain concerned by the fact that attacks against civilians in LRA-affected areas were again on the rise in early 2012 and that more than 445,000 people are internally

displaced or living as refugees as a result of LRA activities.

Portugal strongly condemns the continued violations by the LRA of international humanitarian law and human rights law, including the recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming, rape, sexual violence and abductions. We strongly urge the LRA to put an end to those practices, to release all abducted persons and to disarm, demobilize and surrender. We also encourage all States to cooperate in order to implement the International Criminal Court arrest warrants for the three remaining LRA leaders in order to bring them to justice.

The present situation clearly shows that the LRA remains capable of having a terrible impact on civilian populations and thus poses a continuing threat to regional security, notwithstanding the fact that over the years the group has seen its numbers reduced significantly as a result of the steps taken by Governments in the region, with the assistance of the international community.

It is crucial that all actors continue to be engaged until the LRA threat is removed. In that regard, Portugal welcomes the regional strategy developed by UNOCA, in coordination with the relevant United Nations actors and the African Union, to guide the efforts of the United Nations, including the United Nations peacekeeping missions in the region, and other stakeholders in support of international efforts, led by the African Union, to neutralize the threat posed by the LRA and to address the impact of its activities in the four affected countries.

The implementation of that strategy is a crucial step in order to translate the renewed attention given by the international community to the LRA issue in the past year into concrete results by attaining the five goals set in the strategy, including the full implementation of the African Union-led regional cooperation initiative.

We remain encouraged by the fact that the four LRA-affected countries have confirmed their willingness to contribute to the Regional Task Force and to provide premises for the various components of the regional initiative. We encourage them to further strengthen regional cooperation in order to overcome, with increased support from the international community, the important challenges that lie ahead regarding the implementation of the initiative, and thus succeed in apprehending the top commanders of the LRA and enhancing tactical coordination, information-sharing and joint planning.

At the same time, it is fundamental that committed efforts be deployed by all relevant actors in order to fulfil the other strategic objectives set in the regional strategy. These objectives are aimed at, first, enhancing the protection of civilians; secondly, expanding disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement activities to cover LRA-affected areas; thirdly, promoting a coordinated humanitarian and child-protection response in those areas; and fourthly, providing support to the Governments of LRA-affected countries in the domains of peacebuilding, human rights, the rule of law and long-term development, thus enabling them to extend State authority throughout their territories.

Let me conclude with respect to the LRA by underlining once again the importance of sustaining the engagement of the Security Council on this issue. Thus, we firmly support the adoption today of a Security Council presidential statement, ensuring that the Council will continue to closely follow this issue. Portugal will spare no effort to continue to mobilize the international community and to improve the United Nations response to this scourge.

Let me now turn to UNOCA, whose work we believe will contribute significantly to enhancing the United Nations engagement towards the achievement of peace and security in Central Africa. We highlight the importance of UNOCA's continuing its close coordination with the Economic Community of Central African States and the United Nations Office for West Africa on relevant security challenges with a great impact not only on the West and Central Africa subregions, but to the entire international community, including security and terrorism, the fight against drug trafficking, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and illicit flows of arms and fighters.

As far as the LRA is concerned, the main issue linking the two comprehensive briefings we have had the opportunity to hear today, we welcome the fact that UNOCA will be responsible for overall monitoring and reporting on the regional strategy on the LRA. Let me conclude by reiterating strong support for UNOCA's innovative efforts addressed at helping to prevent the emergence of new conflicts, resolving existing ones by peaceful means, and promoting democratic and accountable governance in the subregion of Central Africa.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): I wish to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his briefing. Many thanks also go to Special Envoy Madeira for his information on the African Union-led regional initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The humanitarian impact of the scourge of the LRA is unspeakable. It depends not on the size of the LRA, but on its massive use of violence, including sexual violence against women and children, abductions and horrifying attacks. It has uprooted hundreds of thousands of civilians across the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. The ability of the LRA to operate across national borders and to exploit weak State authority in the region highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach.

The threat posed by the LRA to regional stability needs to end. The human consequences of the LRA's atrocities need to be addressed. The protection of children deserves our special attention, as the LRA is synonymous with the brutal abduction and use of children as child soldiers, porters, spies and sex slaves. As Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, we will ensure a close follow-up of the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the LRA (S/2012/365) and strive for comprehensive recommendations. We reiterate that a durable solution to the LRA threat requires both military efforts, carried out in compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, and non-military efforts, including enhanced humanitarian aid and development measures.

It is against this backdrop that I would like to highlight three points.

First, the Governments of Uganda, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan are ultimately responsible for ending the LRA threat and for protecting their civilians. They need to be in the lead. Their political commitment and cooperation at the State, military and community levels are indispensable. We therefore want to encourage them to make the response to the LRA a national priority, to further strengthen their collaboration, and to invest all necessary resources in the implementation of the African Union (AU) initiative against the LRA. We commend the support that is provided in this regard by the United States to the affected countries.

The successful rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-LRA combatants could promote further defections. We therefore want to also encourage the countries of the region to put in place policies supporting defections, including through comprehensive disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) programmes, and to ensure a common approach with respect to a legal framework on the treatment of ex-LRA and abductees who have escaped from the LRA.

Secondly, we welcome the close collaboration between Special Representative Abou Moussa and Special Envoy Madeira in support of the AU initiative against the LRA. We consider the African Union involvement to be essential to strengthening coordination, information-sharing and trust among the four militaries of the LRA-affected countries. We also encourage the African Union to prioritize the protection of civilians and to implement a strategy in this regard. All military efforts against the LRA need to put the protection of civilians, notably also of children, front and centre.

Thirdly, we strongly welcome and support the United Nations regional strategy to address the LRA threat. It provides a good basis for improving cross-border mechanisms and regional inter-mission cooperation in all relevant fields. We commend the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) for its leading role in coordinating the strategy and all United Nations actors for their contributions.

The cooperation between the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan to extend MONUSCO's regional LRA communication strategy is a good example of enhanced inter-mission cooperation that is already in place. Further efforts are needed. We therefore encourage the swift implementation of the strategy. This will require the full commitment of all United Nations actors and external partners.

The successful implementation will also depend on the further support of the international community. Germany is committed to contributing to that end. Apart from humanitarian assistance provided to LRA-affected communities, we will support the expansion of MONUSCO's standard operating procedures for DDRRR across the region. The project will also provide support for sensitizing LRA combatants with the aim of

encouraging defections. All activities will also include capacity-building for national actors, including civil society.

UNOCA's follow-up of the regional strategy will be important and needs to remain a priority. The Security Council should be kept informed accordingly by a report of the Secretary-General, as suggested in the draft presidential statement prepared by the United Kingdom delegation, which we fully support.

Turning finally to UNOCA's wider role, we commend Special Representative Moussa and UNOCA for their contribution to peace and stability in the Central African region. We support the work priorities set out in the report of the Secretary-General, in particular support for the capacity-building of the Economic Community of Central African States in the field of early warning and conflict prevention, enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, and for the AU-led efforts to address the LRA threats. These areas should remain at the core of UNOCA's activities. We welcome the established working relations between UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the envisaged joint initiatives on terrorism and illicit flow of weapons across the two subregions. Given UNOCA's limited resources, it will remain crucial to prioritize its work programme and to focus on specific activities.

In closing, I want to express our support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNOCA, including for UNOCA's mandate renewal in August.

Mr. Kandangha-Bariki (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), as well as His Excellency Ambassador Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union on Lord's Resistance Army Issues.

For several years now, the countries of the Central African subregion, with substantial support from the international community, have been untiring in their effort to rebuild a regional architecture for peace and security. Such a strategy has certainly not yet produced the expected results; but it has made it possible to ensure stability in several of the region's States. In that regard, my country welcomes the atmosphere of calm that currently prevails in most of the countries concerned, and we welcome the efforts made by their Governments, the various United Nations missions and all partners to achieve that outcome.

The current peaceful trend we see in various countries of the region should not, however, lead us to cease to express our great concern at the ongoing fighting in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular in North Kivu. That situation poses a great threat to the stability of the entire region. The fighting, which is pitting the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo against the so-called M-23 Movement, is significantly undermining all the efforts made in recent years to bring lasting stability to that part of the country. This is also at the heart of the worrying situation concerning the deterioration in relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. Given that especially troubling situation, Togo urges both countries to avoid any action that could lead to a direct confrontation. We also call on them to resume a genuine and frank dialogue without delay, with a view to safeguarding regional peace and security.

My country believes that one of the ways to decisively address the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is to carry out security sector reform, including a disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration programme (DDRRR). Both security sector reform and DDRRR are essential to the consolidation of peace and security.

The countries of Central Africa, but also those of West Africa, today face such new threats to security as piracy at sea, armed robbery along the shores of the Gulf of Guinea and trafficking in small arms as well as other sophisticated weapons. Those cross-cutting threats to security are a source of great concern. The require us to mobilize in a major way, respond robustly and carry out close cooperation among concerned countries of the region.

Togo is pleased that the Security Council has responded quickly to this situation by adopting various resolutions, including resolution 2039 (2012), which was adopted on 29 February. The commitment of the leaders of West and Central Africa to combat this scourge should be reflected in the decisions they take at the regional summit devoted to piracy at sea. My country welcomes UNOCA's initiatives in this regard and urges it to provide further assistance to the States of the region in order to ensure the success of the summit.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), in addition to being an armed group responsible for the worst of atrocities, especially against women and children, who are routinely kidnapped and forced to commit atrocities, as well as girls, who are used as sexual slaves, is also a serious threat to the peace and stability of various countries in Central and Eastern Africa, in particular Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, among others.

Although, thanks to the concerted efforts of the Governments concerned and by the international community, there was a decrease in 2011 in the nuisance posed by this terrorist group, it is nevertheless still the case that it remains active in various areas, including in Orientale province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where many deadly attacks by this group have been recorded in recent months.

This climate of insecurity is only serving to worsen the humanitarian problems being experienced by the region. In that regard, I would refer to the existence of the 445,000 persons displaced as a result of the LRA's activities who are facing hunger and malnutrition. We encourage the countries of the region to work to ensure security for humanitarian organizations in order that they can come to the aid of those hundreds of thousands of displaced people.

We welcome the resolute determination of affected countries to join their efforts in order to more effectively combat the LRA. The strengthening of the early-warning system should help make it possible to exchange information and act in a concerted manner.

We also welcome the recent arrest of senior LRA leader Caesar Acellam Otto by Ugandan armed forces in the Central African Republic. This is unquestionably a significant gain in pursing LRA fighters. While Togo agrees that amnesty for a given number of the LRA fighters could contribute to resolving the issue, we nevertheless believe that the group's senior leaders and all those accused of serious crimes should answer for their actions before the law.

Moreover, we welcome the resolute response by the African Union in combating the LRA. On 24 March, the Union put in place a military force of 5,000 in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, whose mission is to put a definite end to the group's activities, including tracking and intercepting it's leader, Joseph Kony, wanted by the law at the international level for his outrages against children in Central Africa.

Joint efforts by the African Union and UNOCA, with the support of regional and international actors, as part of a regional strategy to combat the LRA, will certainly help to more effectively address the menace posed by this group. In that regard, we would like to thank organizations and countries such as the European Union and the United States, as well as all partners and donors, who are currently providing major logistical and financial support to combat the LRA. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to launch an urgent appeal for greater efforts on the part of the international community in overcoming the security and humanitarian challenges posed by the LRA for several years now.

In conclusion, Togo strongly supports the draft presidential statement that will most likely be adopted at the end of this meeting.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Moussa and African Union Special Envoy Madeira for their statements this morning.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has plagued Central Africa for far too long. The United States commends Special Representative Moussa and the United Nations for the comprehensive regional strategy devised to address the threat posed by the LRA once and for all. The real test of the strategy will be whether it translates into concrete action on the ground. The United States encourages United Nations missions in the region to help implement it and calls on other nations to address the gaps and areas for improvement that the United Nations has outlined.

The United States, in partnership with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations, supports the Governments of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda in their efforts to apprehend Joseph Kony and the top LRA commanders. Two months ago, President Obama announced that the United States will continue the deployment of a small number of United States military advisers who are assisting the forces of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda in pursuing the LRA and protecting local populations.

We welcome the significant progress made in weakening the LRA and commend Uganda on the capture of LRA senior commander Caesar Acellam Otto last month. The number of people reported killed by LRA attacks is low compared to previous years and most attacks are focused on looting food and supplies, suggesting that the LRA is in survival mode. Nevertheless, we must not forget that the LRA has been weakened before and has re-emerged when the pressure on it is reduced. Since the majority of reported LRA attacks and abductions occur in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in coordination with the Congolese Government to increase focus on the LRA and help protect civilians are especially critical. More must be done to ensure that the LRA cannot gain breathing room in any part of the region. A future free of the LRA will require the continued resolve and stronger collaboration of regional Governments, and we welcome the AU's initiative aimed at helping to foster increased cooperation.

The United States believes that, along with military pressure, encouraging and helping members of the LRA to surrender is critical to weakening the organization. The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic, MONUSCO and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan have already begun to expand disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration activities across all LRA-affected areas. In the weeks since Caesar Acellam Otto's capture, a few LRA fighters have surrendered peacefully. The United States is working with United Nations missions and military forces in the region to expand communications, including by distributing leaflets and making radio broadcasts urging LRA fighters to defect. We join regional Governments in calling on the remaining fighters and abductees in the LRA to surrender peacefully and return home. To assist in that effort, the United States is funding programmes aimed at addressing the psychological and social needs of former abducted children and helping them reunite with their families and communities.

As we support the region's efforts to dismantle the LRA and rehabilitate its abductees, we must continue to support the communities besieged by the LRA threat. The strategy of the United Nations rightly emphasizes the protection of civilians and humanitarian response. The United States funds programmes to help LRA-affected communities develop protection plans and connect with other communities. We also provide humanitarian assistance that targets 240,000 people across the LRA-affected region.

Beyond that of the LRA, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) has a difficult set of challenges to address. Piracy and armed robbery at sea affect the peace and security of West and Central Africa. We are pleased to see that UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa are making progress on the Council's request earlier this year for support to States and subregional organizations in convening a joint summit on piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, and in developing a comprehensive strategy to address that threat.

In conclusion, we would like to commend the thousands of United Nations peacekeepers, observers and humanitarian and human rights workers for their dedication and sacrifice as they work to promote peace in Central Africa.

Mr. Alzate (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Mr. Abou Moussa, for his comprehensive and instructive remarks. I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the efforts and energy that he has brought to launching UNOCA's work. Similarly, I would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance Army Issues, Ambassador Francisco Caetano José Madeira, for his informative briefing.

In recent years, Central Africa has made considerable progress in consolidating its democratic political systems, strengthening its institutions, achieving economic growth and establishing cooperation mechanisms that enable it to provide coordinated responses to the various cross-border problems affecting States in the subregion. We very much welcome the fact that three Central African countries have launched electoral processes, and that the average economic growth for 2011 was 5.2 per cent and is expected to reach an even higher level in 2012. Similarly, we should highlight the dynamism of the national debates on political, electoral, economic and human rights reform.

Despite such progress, as the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/421) explains, national authorities must

be supported so that they can establish frameworks that will enable them to develop and strengthen national and regional institutions and capacities so that they can address the various challenges that have the potential to jeopardize the security and stability of the countries and the region as a whole.

In that context, UNOCA has a particular role to play in formulating regional approaches aimed at addressing the security problems affecting Central Africa. To that end, the support and closely coordinated efforts of the entire United Nations system are crucial to making a reality of the motto "Delivering as one". UNOCA plays a very important role in channelling and promoting dialogue and exchange between the subregion and the United Nations system.

Electoral issues, systems for protecting human rights, the various manifestations of transnational organized crime, piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are priority areas on which UNOCA must continue to focus the attention and coordination of the various United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as of the international community in general, with the goal of promoting an approach based on cooperation and on strengthening national and subregional capacities.

While progress has been made in combating the Lord's Resistance Army, the group continues to pose a serious threat to the security of countries in the region, and its activities continue to have very bad humanitarian effects on the population. Grave violations of international humanitarian law and of human rights are the key traits that define and characterize the actions of one of the worst armed groups ever to have emerged in history.

We welcome the actions undertaken by the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda. We very much welcome the support and cooperation that has been provided by the African Union as led by Special Envoy Francisco Caetano José Madeira, the United States of America and the European Union in order to meet the challenges posed by the Lord's Resistance Army.

In the same vein, we are pleased to acknowledge the further development of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threats and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army, which is a fundamental tool designed to guide the actions of the United Nations in support of the regional cooperation initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army led by the African Union. Now is the time for the sustained and comprehensive implementation of the strategy, with equal importance to be attached to all of its components. Achieving lasting and definitive success against the Lord's Resistance Army will require long-term political commitment, the provision of sufficient resources and the effective coordination of all stakeholders with the aim of achieving quantifiable, feasible objectives.

Particular attention must be paid to addressing the precarious living conditions of the population dwelling in the areas affected by the presence of the Lord's Resistance Army. There is a need for the implementation of robust economic development programmes that will improve social and economic indicators and which will enable the population to live in an environment conducive to their well-being.

Finally, we wish to express our support for the draft presidential statement that has been prepared on the issue.

Mr. Tarar (Pakistan): We would like to thank Special Representative Abou Moussa for his briefing and for his invaluable work as the Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). We also extend our gratitude to the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance Army Issues, Ambassador Francisco Caetano José Madeira, for his statement.

The report of the Secretary General on the activities of UNOCA and on areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (S/2012/421) highlights several challenges being faced by the subregion, including a fragile security situation, the proliferation of weapons, the menace of transatlantic crime, the issue of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and threats posed by terrorism and the activities of armed groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). As noted by the report, those challenges have been further exacerbated due to an influx of illegal arms and combatants in the region as part of the fallout of the Libyan crisis. Addressing those cross-cutting challenges requires greater collaboration and coordination at the regional and subregional levels.

Against that backdrop, the work of UNOCA remains important for the peace and stability of the subregion through mediation and the provision of good offices, ensuring a coherent and coordinated United Nations system response to challenges faced by the

subregion and strengthening the capacity of subregional organizations to address regional peace and security challenges.

We are deeply concerned at the increased attacks against civilians by the LRA and the resulting displacement of populations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. The threat posed by the LRA requires a coordinated regional and international response entailing a comprehensive approach aimed not only at eliminating and bringing to justice the remaining leadership of the LRA, but also towards strengthening the State capacity of the relevant countries and addressing the long-term developmental needs of the LRA-affected areas.

In that regard, we welcome the development by UNOCA, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the LRA. We hope that the strategy will provide a strong basis for a comprehensive response to the threat posed by the LRA. We also welcome the launching of the African Union-led regional cooperation initiative against LRA and the commitment of the LRA-affected countries to contribute troops to the regional task force under the initiative.

The successful implementation of the initiative hinges on the availability of adequate and timely resources and on building the requisite capacities of the militaries in the LRA-affected countries. The international community should provide the resources needed for the successful implementation of the initiative, in line with the priorities identified by the African Union and consistent with the principle of national ownership.

Pakistan will continue to support all efforts for durable peace and stability in Central Africa and for countering the threat posed by the LRA to the subregion.

Mr. Zhukov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Mr. Moussa and Mr. Madeira for their briefings.

We share the assessments and conclusions contained in the reports of the Secretary-General (S/2012/365 and S/2012/421). We note some progress in consolidating democratic processes in a number of States in the subregion, including the peaceful holding of elections and the orderly transition of power. We also welcome the efforts of Central African countries to encourage regional integration and cross-border cooperation.

A serious threat to peace and stability continues to be posed by the work of armed groups and the uninterrupted flow of weapons and combatants as a result of the negative impact of the Libyan crisis. In this regard, we attach great significance to the efforts to strengthen security in countries in the subregion, including the signing of the Kinshasa Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Of no lesser importance are measures taken by States in the Gulf of Guinea to combat armed piracy in coastal waters, including the preparation of a regional summit on this issue, with the participation of all interested parties.

We are concerned by the growth in the activity of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). We have seen more than 50 attacks on civilians in the first three months of this year alone. Due to looting, approximately 450,600 people are still refugees and internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic and South Sudan. The work of this group is seriously destabilizing the military, political and humanitarian situation in the affected areas, and it undermines the efforts at their post-conflict recovery.

We call for a comprehensive approach to handling this issue, which calls for the implementation of military, political, socio-economic, humanitarian and outreach measures. That would allow us to eliminate the breeding ground for the work of the Lord's Resistance Army, including by means of strengthening State institutions and alleviating poverty and mass unemployment. We believe it is important to take steps to extend State authority to remote areas and to ensure sustainable socio-economic development there. We believe it is equally urgent to steadily implement disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants and to strengthen and effectively reform the security sector.

We welcome the growing cooperation of States in the subregion in regional and international organizations and with other parties interested in combating this group. We note the official launching in the spring of 2012 of the corresponding initiative by the African Union (AU), which calls in particular for the establishment of an operational force of 5,000 soldiers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Uganda.

We believe that the regional United Nations strategy to counteract the LRA, which the Council has developed through the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and with the AU and other partners, will help broaden the coordination of collective efforts in this area. That document, which is in our view solid, charts the full range of interrelated goals, objectives and activities to combat that militia and to eliminate the consequences of its criminal activity for the countries in the subregion.

We note the contribution of UNOCA to the collective efforts to combat the LRA and the key role it has in preventing conflicts, ensuring peace and security, peacebuilding and strengthening the coordination of the United Nations work and the work of regional and subregional organizations in Central Africa.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Mr. Abou Moussa for the informative briefing that he has given us concerning the work of his office and for his report on the areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). We also thank Ambassador Francisco Caetano José Madeira for the very useful information he has given us.

We welcome the measures adopted by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to facilitate regional initiatives and coordinate the activities undertaken by the entities of the United Nations to prevent conflicts and help build peace in the Central African region. UNOCA has an important role to play. We commend the determination of UNOCA to work closely with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) in order to tackle the serious security problems that face those two subregions. The joint efforts of UNOCA and UNOWA will be indispensable in dealing with the negative repercussions of the conflict in Libya for Western and Central Africa and for insecurity in the Sahel region. We call upon UNOCA to continue its efforts in order to enhance coordination of the United Nations missions that are working in the region, and to promote cooperation with regional organizations such as the Economic Community of Central African States and the African Union.

As for the Lord's Resistance Army, my delegation remains concerned, of course, by the devastating effects that this armed group and its current activities continue to have in the areas within which it operates. The brutality of its activities continues to threaten thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children.

We therefore support the regional strategy presented by UNOCA in cooperation with the African Union to combat the initiatives of the Lord's Resistance Army, improve efforts to promote the protection of civilians by establishing mechanisms for humanitarian assistance and for the protection of children in all of the affected areas, and provide assistance to the Governments that are affected by this rebel group. We encourage the authorities of each of the affected countries to lend their support and cooperation to this strategy for the benefit of their peoples, who for decades now have had to suffer under the scourge of this armed group.

Once again, we vigorously condemn the violations that have been committed and that unfortunately continue to be committed by the Lord's Resistance Army and we express our solidarity with the victims. Guatemala has also been a direct victim of the attacks perpetrated by that armed group. In January 2006, eight Guatemalan peacekeeping officers who had been deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo lost their lives in Garamba National Park when they were ambushed by members of the Lord's Resistance Army. We still hope that one day the perpetrators of those acts will be brought to justice. For that reason, we urge for the execution of the arrest warrants that were issued by the International Criminal Court for the three leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army who have been charged with, among others things, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We encourage all States to cooperate with the Court in order to execute those warrants and to bring the perpetrators of those atrocities to justice.

Finally, we would like to express our support for the draft presidential statement to be adopted today.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports (S/2012/365 and S/2012/421) and for developing the regional strategy on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as requested by the Security Council in its presidential statement of 14 November 2011 (S/PRST/2011/21).

I would also like to thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, and Ambassador Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance Army Issues, for their briefings.

The initiatives implemented up to now by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) show the vigor of that recently created Office. A number of political and security challenges remain in Central Africa and require a pooling of efforts by all stakeholders. We welcome the efforts made by UNOCA to that end.

The fight against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is also a source of concern for the Security Council. We welcome the upcoming summit of heads of State on piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, which is made possible by support from UNOCA. The holding of that summit, as requested by the Council in resolution 2039 (2012), will allow participants to develop a regional anti-piracy strategy.

Efforts to combat all forms of transnational organized crime must also be pursued and, in that regard, we welcome the signing between UNOCA and the Economic Community of West African States of a cooperation framework defining priority themes for partnerships, such as political governance and combating weapons proliferation.

With regard to supporting democracy in the region, we reiterate the need for the holding of free and transparent elections to establish lasting peace in Africa. We encourage UNOCA to continue to support national efforts on that issue.

Among the challenges of peace and security in Central Africa, the Lord's Resistance Army remains a subject of major concern. We would like to thank UNOCA for developing the United Nations regional strategy, which complements the existing mechanisms through specific objectives and measures and will allow us to strengthen the coherence and coordination of United Nations activities and of other stakeholders.

Given the ongoing threats alluded to by a number of speakers, efforts made up to now must be pursued and consolidated in a coordinated fashion. In terms of security, our priority must be to ensure the protection of civilians. We support the numerous initiatives of partners on the ground to establish early warning mechanisms.

Once again, we reiterate our full support for the work done by the troops of our partners in Central Africa. We also encourage the defection of rebels. In that regard, the existing programmes of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation (DDRRR) must be extended to all affected areas. Particular focus should be put on reintegration with the establishment of appropriate welcoming structures. We support the strategy proposal whereby the offices and missions of the United Nations must develop a common approach for the DDRRR process and establish standard procedures for welcoming children who were previously enlisted.

At the same time, ongoing efforts to arrest and bring to justice the top leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), including Joseph Kony, must be pursued. We encourage States concerned to strengthen their cooperation with the International Criminal Court in that regard.

France supports all of those efforts through its contribution to the Peace Facility for Africa of the European Union, which approved granting €1.2 million to the African Union at the end of 2011. France also bilaterally supports the States affected by the LRA by, for example, contributing significantly on an ongoing basis with the Central African Republic on military matters. We support in particular the capacity-building of the Central African armed forces. We also provide humanitarian assistance to the populations affected by the attacks and conduct socio-economic reintegration programmes for child soldiers in the four countries concerned.

In conclusion, we encourage States affected by the LRA that have a lead role to play to maintain their efforts with determination. We are at their side. We must not let up in our efforts to sustainably put an end to the threat of the LRA and comfort the civilian populations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

Currently, the overall political situation in Central Africa is stable. Economic development has achieved results and countries of the region are continuing with the integration process. China finds that gratifying.

We note, at the same time, that efforts to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development in Central Africa still face many challenges, with the region's weak economic foundation and rampant transnational organized crime, which seriously undermine social stability. In particular, the Libyan crisis caused the proliferation of arms in the Sahel region as a result of arms smuggling, which threatens the peace and

security of some countries in the region. China is very concerned about that.

China hopes that the international community will pay more attention to central Africa and provide effective help. We are willing to continue to play an active and constructive role in that regard.

China strongly condemns the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA,) which continues to move around in many countries, causing instability and damage. We are seriously concerned by the humanitarian problems caused by LRA activities. We support the countries of the region in their efforts to combat the LRA, welcome the relevant African Union cooperation initiative and appreciate the regional strategy formulated by the United Nations to combat the LRA. We hope that various actors in the international community will enhance communication, coordinate action and guarantee the provision of sufficient resources to ensure the effective implementation of both the initiative and the strategy.

China appreciates the efforts made by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to maintain regional peace and security in that area and will continue to support the work of UNOCA and the Special Representative Moussa.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The Council has before it the text of a draft presidential statement on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank the Council members for their valuable contributions to the draft statement.

In accordance with understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2012/18.

It is so decided.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Doubane (Central African Republic): As this is the second time that I am taking the floor this June to address the Council, allow me, Mr. President, to commend you for the outstanding manner in which you are guiding the work of the Council.

The presentation of the report (S/2012/421) of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and on areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army provides the delegation of the Central African Republic, of which I am the head, a further opportunity to first commend the Secretary-General for his clear and concise depiction of the situation in Central Africa, and, secondly, to thank his Special Representative, Mr. Abou Moussa, for the dedicated manner in which he is leading his mission in the subregion. I would like also to convey my gratitude to Mr. Francisco Madeira, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Lord's Resistance Army issues, who is also working tirelessly to eradicate the scourge of the LRA in those countries that are the victims of the atrocities perpetrated by that group of bandits and criminals. Finally, I should like to congratulate Mr. Guélengdouksia Ouaidou on his election to the post of Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which is a subregional partner.

The Central African Republic is addressing the Council today so as to convey a message in its capacity as, first, a country that is a victim of the LRA; secondly, as a fragile country of the subregion that is racked by increasing insecurity; and, thirdly, as a member of the international community, in order to mobilize that community to pay closer attention to the situation that prevails there.

Since 2008 the LRA has been killing, robbing and plundering, and recruiting women, children and men in the east, south-east and north-east parts of my country, the Central African Republic. We would recall once again that we share no border with Uganda; nor do we share any common history with that brotherly State. The people of the Central African Republic therefore continue to wonder what the real motives for that aggression are. By way of illustration, in the year 2012 alone the LRA has carried out 20 attacks, and its actions have resulted in numerous deaths and abductions, displaced 20,400 people and left in their wake 5,000 refugees and 3,000 children kept out of school — all of which is taking place against the backdrop of a shredded socio-economic fabric.

That impoverished area, where life is precarious, is profoundly destabilized, which further complicates the delivery of assistance and other humanitarian efforts intended for the benefit of the victims and the local host populations. Today the greatest hope of these weary people is to see this scourge ended once and for all, so

that peace — the prerequisite for development — can return once and for all.

Mr. Kony and his band of barbarians must be neutralized. They must be arrested and tried for their countless unspeakable crimes perpetrated against peaceful citizens. That will lead to the release of our children, allowing them to return home to their families, schools and games.

Allow me to take this opportunity to respond to the many letters that we have received from schoolchildren worldwide drawing the attention of the Government of the Central African Republic to the alarming issue of children abducted in conflict areas, in particular by the LRA. Here and now, we reiterate to them — and in doing so support the position of Germany — that we have heard them, that the situation is being duly addressed and that we will spare no effort in order to ensure that our Government, international organizations — the United Nations in particular — UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross work together to resolve this issue. Let me say it once again: children belong with their families, in school or on the playground.

In that way women, the pillars of our society, freed from the yoke of the sexual servitude to which they have been condemned, will also be able to rejoin their families.

On the basis of those aspirations, the highest authorities of my country are sparing no effort to end this harsh rebellion, working jointly and in a coordinated manner with the defence and security forces of the subregion.

Here we wish, on behalf of all the people of the Central African Republic, to express our gratitude for the efforts made by the United Nations, the African Union, ECCAS, the European Union, France and the United States Government, whose military advisers are actively working side by side with us on the ground. We wish also to thank the agencies of the United Nations system and the non-governmental organizations, both national and international, which every day are working for the benefit of the local populations, displaced persons, refugees and other victims.

In this struggling subregion, in a world that is fraught with many dangers, closer attention should be paid to this part of Africa, which is shaped like a gun, with the trigger, unfortunately, at the very heart of the continent. Supporting the peace process and helping to stabilize the countries of the subregion is like taking out life insurance for the stability of our continent; supporting the efforts of the subregion is to lay the foundations for holistic and long-lasting development.

The LRA is a terrorist movement. It is the perpetrator of trans-border crimes. It impedes development, and for all of those reasons it must be combated. Mr. Kony and his men are vile criminals, and there can be no tolerance for them. We therefore call with all our hearts for the mobilization of the international community as a whole so as to put an end to this mockery, which is an affront to our civilized world.

Central Africa, and my country in particular, aspires to and desires peace so to enable our development. The Council's commitment to stand by our side is all the more necessary as it is in keeping with the aspirations and objectives of our Organization.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): We are drawing near to the end of the work of the Council for this month. On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I should like to thank all the members of the Council, in particular my colleagues the Permanent Representatives, the Deputy Permanent Representatives and their teams. My thanks also go the Secretariat for all the support it has provided to facilitate our work. Indeed, we had a very busy month. We reached consensus on some major issues. Without the support and hard work of delegations and of the Secretariat, including the interpreters, translators, conference officers and sound engineers, we would not have been able to complete our work on our own.

As China wraps up its presidency, I should like, on behalf of the Council, to wish the Colombian delegation a successful month of July.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.